**Legislation to prohibit America to sell F-16 to Pakistan**

3773. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the pro-India lobby in the U.S. including Democratic Senators, is moving to introduce a legislation in the U.S. Congress to prohibit the sale of F-16s to Pakistan;

(b) whether a group of Democratic Senators has already urged the White House not to proceed with the sale of F-16 to Pakistan; and

(c) whether India has engaged any professional firm in U.S. to conduct lobbying operations for Indian causes and interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) In the first session of 109th U.S. Congress, Gary L. Ackerman, Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, introduced a bill "to prohibit the provision of United States military assistance and the sale, transfer, or licensing of United State military equipment or technology to Pakistan". The bill makes such military assistance to Pakistan conditional on U.S. President's certification that the Government of Pakistan provided the U.S. with unrestricted opportunities in investigating the illegal nuclear proliferation network established and operated by A. Q. Khan.

(b) On December 10, 2004 a letter titled "Protect our Strategic Interests in South Asia, Oppose F-16s for Pakistan" was circulated by Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans in the House of Representatives. The letter opposed F-16 sale to Pakistan and asked the members of the House to join in sending a letter to President Bush to this effect. It referred to the President Bush's National Security Strategy released in 2002, which recognized the importance of changing the dynamic between the United States and India. It underscored that if the United States provided F-16s to Pakistan, planes inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons, the message would be that U.S.'s true strategic partner in South Asia was Pakistan and such a message would squander an opportunity to continue building the strong relationship that the United States needed with India.

(c) The earlier contract of lobbying firm expired on 30 September 2004 and was not renewed. The appointment of another lobbying firm to advance India's interests in the US Congress would follow a detailed analysis of past results and an assessment of future objectives.